

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1117

By Towns

A RESOLUTION to honor the outstanding musical career of "Little Richard" Penniman.

WHEREAS, Little Richard, the originator, the emancipator, the architect of rock and roll, exploded into the American consciousness in the mid-1950's and singlehandedly laid the foundation and established the rules for a new type of music called "rock and roll"; and

WHEREAS, Richard Wayne Penniman, better known as Little Richard, was born and raised in Macon, Georgia; and

WHEREAS, as a child he sang in the church choir, and while washing dishes in a Greyhound bus station, he sent a demo to Specialty Records. The song, "Tutti Frutti," was his catalyst for success and led to an uninterrupted run of smash hits; and

WHEREAS, as a result of such hits as "Tutti Frutti," "Long Tall Sally," "Rip It Up," "Lucille," "Jenny Jenny," "Keep a Knockin'," "Good Golly, Miss Molly," and "Ooh, My Soul," Little Richard had sold over 32 million records internationally by 1968; and

WHEREAS, after a self-imposed hiatus, he came back in 1985 with rave reviews for a memorable appearance in the box office smash "Down and Out in Beverly Hills," which also launched his hit single, "Great Gosh A Mighty"; and

WHEREAS, in 1986, he was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and began a nonstop series of performances and appearances, including live concerts worldwide, recording projects, television, film, soundtracks, and commercials; and

WHEREAS, he was honored with a star on the world-renowned Hollywood Walk of Fame in 1990; and

WHEREAS, in 1993, he received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, and, in 1994, he was awarded the Rhythm & Blues

Foundation's prestigious Pioneer Award; and

WHEREAS, in 1997, in recognition of his contributions to music history, Little Richard was presented with the American Music Award's distinguished Award of Merit, and in 2003, he was inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, in 2007, his 1955 original hit, "Tutti Frutti," was voted Number 1 by a panel of renowned recording artists in *Mojo's* Top 100 Records That Changed The World, hailing the song as "the sound of the birth of rock and roll"; and

WHEREAS, for many years, Little Richard moved back and forth from rock and roll to the ministry and gospel music, but he has been able to reconcile the two roles in his later life; and

WHEREAS, on June 12, 2009, prior to performing for the grand finale of the 29th Riverbend Music Festival in Chattanooga, Mr. Penniman stated: "Although I sing rock and roll, God still loves me. I'm a rock and roll singer, but I'm still a Christian."; and

WHEREAS, after having recorded in the Volunteer State for many the years, Little Richard is now a proud Tennessee resident, and we are likewise proud to count him as a Tennessean; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby commend one of this state's most outstanding citizens, "Little Richard" Penniman, for his groundbreaking career and many innovations and especially thank him for spreading joy and delighting people worldwide with his wonderful music and performances.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.